

Island Creek Pond Invaded by Weeds

By MICAH GREENBAUM

There is a major problem with Island Creek Pond this summer; weeds have overrun it.

According to Conservation Administrator Joe Grady, the weed, water milfoil, is a new problem because it was

not present in large quantities when the weeds were treated in 1995.

The town has spent \$14,000 for mechanical harvesting to rid Island Creek Pond of bladderwort and fanwort. The mechanical harvesting has worked well and the town planned to harvest approximately every 2 years to control the weeds.

However, the harvesting of the bladderwort and fanwort created an opportunity for the water milfoil to take over. Unfortunately, water milfoil can not be harvested like the other 2 weeds can be. Grady is consulting with Kenneth Wagner, Ph.D. of ENSR about the best options to combat the latest weed problem.

Island Creek Pond serves many purposes. It is a place for recreation and relaxation; it provides several cranberry bogs with water and is Duxbury's only natural great pond.

Island Creek Rd. resident Tom Marquis said the weed problem is so pervasive that the recreational use of the pond is impossible.

"It's a good thing the town moved its recreational sailing program," Marquis said. "They couldn't have run the program there again this summer with all the weeds."

In 1995, the town funded a \$10,000 study into the causes and possible solutions for the weeds growing in the pond. The investigation headed by the company Furgo East Inc., concentrated on the weeds overrunning the pond: bladderwort, fanwort, a water milfoil, yellow water lily and pickerelweed.

The study suggested some options to save the pond: reseeding the bottom with rock and sand or using chemicals or mechanical harvesting to get rid of the weeds. The town decided on the mechanical harvesting.

Since the pond's bottom is covered by about 5 feet of muck that promotes plant growth, town officials investigated removing the muck and then reseeding the base; however, that would have cost approximately \$1.6 million.

The next option was to use chemicals, but they only kill the surface of the weed, not the root, and also they would have contaminated the water supply for the cranberry bogs.

Officials hope to find a cost-effective solution to clean up the water milfoil soon, so Island Creek Pond can remain a place of fun and relaxation.